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ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY

Articles

FURTHER INCREASES IN FERTILIZER PRICES

Chemical fertilizer, already at record high prices and in short supply, will become even more expensive.

- Morocco increased the price of phosphate rock by 50% in June after tripling prices in January.
- Togo announced that its rock prices would be based on Morocco's and voided existing contracts.

•	Prices of phosphate rock exported from the United States more than doubled in January and will increase by an additional 32% in July.	25 X 1

Before the latest increases, spot prices of nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers were four to six times the level of June 1973. Potash prices increased by 30% to 40% in the same period.

The bill for importing countries could be three times the 1973 outlays. India, for example, may pay \$500 million for fertilizer in 1974/75, compared with an estimated \$200 million in 1973/74. Western Europe will be hard hit by the increased price of phosphate rock; its import bill in 1974/75 probably will jump to \$1.2 billion to \$1.4 billion, compared with \$300 million in 1973/74.

Fertilizer will remain in short supply over the next year or so, undercutting	
plans to increase crop yields. In recent years, fertilizer has accounted for about	
40% of increased grain yields in the United States, 33% in Taiwan, and 60% in	
India.	2

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CANADA: MEETING WITH COMMODITY EXPORTERS	
In recent months, Canada has sent observers to several meetings of less developed countries planning cooperative action to raise minerals prices. Ottawa's actions underscore the statement by Minister of Energy MacDonald last March that Canada might be willing to associate with these countries to obtain high prices or their minerals	
Canadian officials attended exporter meetings on:	
 Iron ore in Geneva in March, when a working group was established to examine formulas for joint pricing policy. 	
 Copper in Vienna in April, when Chile, Zambia, Zaire, and Peru considered how world prices could be kept up. 	
 Mercury in Algiers in May, when six exporting countries agreed to cooperate in raising prices by 20% to 30%. 	
Canada accounts for 10% of world exports of iron ore, 22% of copper, and 0% of mercury. Most Canadian shipments go to the United States.	
Canadian officials have played down the significance of their attendance at hese meetings. They claim that Ottawa sent representatives merely to keep abreast of market developments. Trade officials emphasize that they did not sanction the price hike for mercury	2

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JAPAN: REAL GNP DROPS SHARPLY

Japan's real GNP fell even more than expected in the first quarter of 1974. Tokyo announced last week that output dropped 5% from the last quarter of 1973, on a seasonally adjusted basis — or 2% from the first quarter of 1973. The decline was the steepest in 20 years and one of the largest among industrial countries. In real terms:

- Private demand fell sharply, as inflation, tight money policies, and soaring oil import costs eroded purchasing power.
- Household income decreased for the first time in years, causing a 5.5% drop in personal consumption.
- Tight money and weak sales finally ended the investment boom.

To help maintain employment, firms allowed inventories of finished goods to rise 30% above the yearend level and reduced working hours. Total hours worked during the first quarter were down 5%, largely because of a cut in overtime. The hard-hit auto industry began operating on a three-day workweek in March.

Even after last week's announcement, Minister of Finance Fukuda reiterated his plans to stimulate demand only gradually while continuing to provide financial assistance to hard-pressed industries. He is particularly concerned about the intense inflationary pressures. In April, for example, retail prices rose at a 38% annual rate. Another inflationary spurt is likely this summer when the government lifts price controls placed on key items in March. We judge that, if stimulative action is not taken soon, real GNP will increase no more than 2% this year.

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GRAIN OUTLOOK IN COMMUNIST EUROPE

Good weather in May improved grain prospects in Eastern Europe, whereas the outlook for the Soviet crop remains indifferent. Assuming average weather throughout the remainder of the crop season, the grain harvests in both areas will be well below the record 1973 levels. This could result in substantial grain imports in FY 1975.

East European Drought Broken

Although average rainfall and below-average temperatures in May alleviated the drought in Eastern Europe, we project breadgrain output at 34-1/2 million tons, still 7% less than last year. The harvest of coarse grains also is expected to fall short of 1973's near record of 34.8 million tons.

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In the southern countries - Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary - the May rains brought most of the winter grains out of the long drought in good condition. They also aided germination and early development of spring sown grains, especially corn. Flooding in Bulgaria and Hungary caused crop losses in some areas. However, because on balance soil moisture remains below normal, a hot, dry summer could reduce grain production even more.

In the northern countries - Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Poland -rainfall ranged from 7% to 15% above normal and subsoil moisture at the end of May was only 10% below normal. In Poland, however, grains suffered from both winterkill and drought, and winterkill may also have been higher than average in East Germany.

Poor Weather Threatens to Reduce Yields in the USSR

Above-average winterkill and delays in spring sowing, taken together with average growing conditions in the important June-July period, indicate a Soviet grain output this year of 190 million tons or less. Although far below the planned output of 206 million tons and last year's record 222.5 million tons, a crop of this size could still exceed the pre-1973 high of 187 million tons.

The USSR normally relies on winter grains for about one-third of its grain supply. In the fall of 1973 the Soviets planted the largest area to winter grains since 1968. Temperature extremes and sparse snow cover damaged about one-fourth of these fields, leaving a smaller acreage than the average harvested in 1966-71. Moreover, yields on the remaining area may be no more than average because of spotty germination last fall, temperature variations, and spring frosts.

Spring sowing got off to an early start, but cold, snow, and rain in mid-April stalled the campaign. Unusual cold in late May killed some of the newly seeded grain in the European RSFSR and the Ukraine. More important, when the last of the late grains is planted this week, the total grain area is likely to be 5 million to 10 million hectares less than the planned 130 million. On the basis of growing conditions so far, yields on spring grains would be below the average of the past 10 years. Weather, however, has its greatest effect on spring grains in June and July.

Shortfalls Could Spur Imports

Eastern Europe's import requirements for FY 1975 are likely to be higher than the 8 million tons estimated for FY 1974 and exports lower. Romania -- usually a net exporter of grain -- entered a precautionary request for US grain before rains improved harvest prospects. Grain imports by the northern countries may also increase because of the reduced output of rye and the possibility of a poor potato crop.

Estimated Soviet domestic requirements and export commitments are at least 6 million tons more than the projected crop. The USSR probably increased grain stocks — mostly wheat — by 15 million to 25 million tons in 1973 following its record harvest. Nevertheless, wheat imports may be necessary to correct imbalances in domestic supplies since the quality of a large share of the wheat stocks may be below milling standards and the share of breadgrains in the 1974 acreage is smaller than usual. If world prices for wheat and feed grains were right, moreover, Moscow might buy to avoid a stock drawdown and to maintain flexibility in meeting requests for grain from Eastern Europe or Third World countries such as India.

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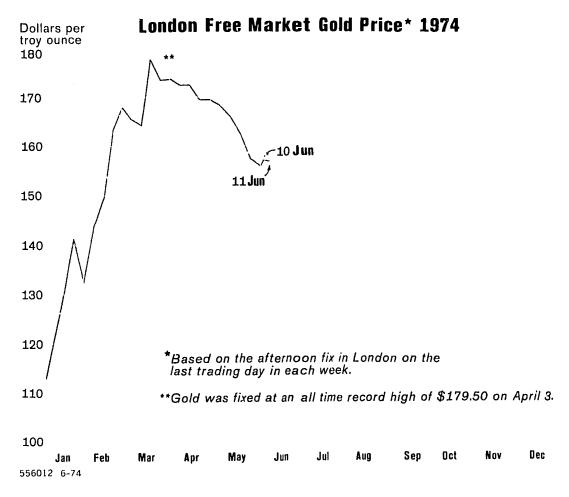
STIR IN WORLD GOLD MARKET

Gold prices have trended downward from a peak of nearly \$180 an ounce in early April to \$157.25 an ounce in London yesterday. In the last two weeks, major oscillations have mainly reflected the market's reaction to US developments:

- 30 May up \$6.50 when the US Senate passed a bill allowing US citizens to own gold.
- 31 May -- down \$5.25 when US Treasury officials emphatically opposed private ownership.
- 5 June up \$7.25 when Secretary Simon suggested the United States may be amenable to a rise in the official price.
- 7 June down \$3.50 when EC finance ministers failed to propose a revaluation in the official price.

The recent downward trend in price is largely explained by the decline in commercial demand for gold, which has been only partially offset by increased speculative demand. Commercial users have gradually withdrawn from the market because of high prices and the worldwide economic slowdown. Some sources estimate commercial gold purchases are down about one-third from their 1973 peak. At the same time, new gold sales by South Africa and the Soviet Union are almost as high as last year.

Sharp fluctuations in the gold price are likely to continue as uncertainty persists about gold's future role in the international monetary system. International financial officials are holding a series of meetings this week at which the role of gold will be on the agenda. EC finance ministers started discussions last week in Luxembourg. The dialogue will continue at the annual meeting of the Bank for



International Settlements in Basle and at the Group of Ten and Committee of Twenty meetings in Washington this week.

The participants will discuss arrangements to permit the use of gold at a higher price in financing payments deficits, without increasing its future role in the monetary system. No agreement is likely to be reached. The Europeans most likely will only reaffirm their consensus that it would be advantageous to use gold reserves in interpank settlements at a value closer to the free market price. If no action is taken, price movements will probably become somewhat more settled, while the downward trend continues.

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CHILE BOOSTING NITRATE PRODUCTION

High world prices for fertilizer have spurred Chile to expand output of natural nitrates, a substitute for petroleum-based nitrogen fertilizers. Santiago is seeking more than \$30 million of foreign credits to purchase the machinery and equipment necessary to raise output 25% to 1 million tons in 1975. It also hopes to obtain

concessionary terms to avoid exceeding the short-term credit ceiling imposed in an IMF \$95 million standby agreement.

Chile is the world's dominant commercial supplier of natural nitrates, largely sodium nitrate found with little or no overburden in the Atacama Desert. These nitrates are particularly valuable because they contain elements useful for sugar beets and crops delayed by frost and drought. In 1973 the Netherlands and the United States purchased 40% of the 420,000 tons exported. Thus far this year, China has contracted for 70,000 tons of Chilean nitrates. Natural nitrate prices are now about double the 1973 level. Prices of petroleum-based fertilizers meanwhile have tripled, making the prices of natural nitrates — on a nutrient content basis — only slightly higher.

Production of natural nitrates has been declining for decades because of the expanded use of cheaper chemical fertilizers. Chilean production in 1965 totaled about 1.2 million tons but dropped to 674,000 tons in 1973 under the Allende government. Rising prices and more efficient management probably will push 1974 production up to 800,000 tons.

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Notes

China Awards Air Navigation Systems Contract to UK Firm

China has awarded Britain's Plessey Navaids a \$2.2 million contract for nine Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) for key airports. Delivery begins in four months. Offers by several US firms were apparently ignored in favor of Plessey, China's longtime supplier of commercial avionics. The equipment is sorely needed to support China's expanding air service. In addition to 10 Boeing 707 aircraft, Peking thus far has received 6 Hawker Siddeley Tridents as well as a number of Soviet IL-62s.

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GM to Help Poland Build Delivery Vans

General Motors has signed a Memorandum of Intent to assist Poland in the design and production of a light vehicle for use as a delivery van, minibus, and ambulance. In payment for technical assistance, machinery, and components, GM will receive finished vehicles over a 15-year period for sale on Western markets. Production is to start in 1978; capacity output of 100,000 vehicles a year by 1980 is planned.

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Austria: Enrichment Contract with the USSR

Austria has become the eighth nation to conclude a deal with the USSR for uranium enrichment services. The \$56 million contract calls for 1.26 million separative work units with delivery beginning in July 1978. The enriched uranium will be used for Austria's second nuclear powerplant, an American-style light water reactor to be constructed at Enns. Austria was forced to rely on the Soviet Union for enriched uranium for the Enns plant because of inability to meet the USAEC's 30 June 1974 contract deadline for enrichment services to be provided before mid-1982. Vienna, which has not made up its mind on the size of the plant, could not furnish the details required by the USAEC.

US Finances Truck Sale to Yugoslavia

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The Ex-Im Bank and a New York commercial bank will finance most of a \$3.1 million sale of quarry trucks to Yugoslavia for use in mining iron ore. The banks are extending direct credit for 90% of the purchase at 7% interest. The 19 trucks on order will be built by WABCO of Illinois. (FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Publication of Interest

Nuclear Power - The Long-Run Solution to Japan's Energy Problems (ER IR 74-12, June 1974,

25X1

This report examines Japanese plans for the development of nuclear power through 1985. It surveys Japan's dependence on foreign technology in developing a domestic capability to provide a complete nuclear fuel cycle. It concludes that by 1985 the planned increase in the use of nuclear power will generate large savings for the economy, whi'e affording substantial market opportunities for foreign nuclear industries.

INTERNAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GNP* Constant Market Prices		G	Average Ann rowth Rate S	
United States Japan West Germany France United Kingdom Italy Canada	Percent Chan rom Previous Quarter -1.6 -5.0 -0.1 1.8 -0.4 0.8 2.8		1 Your Earlier 0.2 -2.4 3.4 5.7 3.9 5.2 7.2	Previous Quarter - 6.3 - 18.6 - 0.3 - 7.3 - 1.4 - 3.4 - 11.6

WHOLESALE PI	RICES		A Gr	iverage Ann owth Rate S	ual Suca
	Latest f	ercent Char rom Previou	រដូម ទ	1 Year	3 Months
United States	Month	Month	1970	Earher	Larher
	Apr 74	2.4	8.6	20.8	30.2
Japan	Apr 74	0.7	11.2	35.6	22.9
West Germany	Mar 74	1.6	6.8	13.1	30.3
France	Apr 74	2.4	12.8	34.0	45.3
United Kingdom	Apr 74	3.3	10.7	23.9	45.2
Italy	Jan 74	7.1	11.8	33.9	68.3
Canada	Mar 74	2.8	104	20.7	30.1

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION.

	Average Annual Growth Nate Since							
		ercent Cha						
11 1	Month	om Previou Month	us 1970	1 Year Earlier	3 Months Earlier **			
United States	Apr 74	0.4	4.6		1 -6.2			
Japan	Apr 74	-1.7		2.7	-9.9			
West Germany	Mar74	-1."	1 .	1,1	-2.2			
France	Mar74	-0 :	· .	5.0	5.4			
United Kingdom	Mar 74	2.	.7	-4.0	-21.1			
Italy	Mar 74	- 2.4	3.9	11.0	- 5.3			
Canada	Feb 74	0.9	6.7	4.5	7.0			

C	0	N	S	U	M	Ε	R	PRICES
_	_	•	~	•		•	•••	1111013

				Average Ann rowth Rate S	
United States	Latest fr Month Apr 74	rcent Char om Previou Month 0.6	nge is 1970 5.8	1 Year Earlier	3 Months Earlier 12.9
Japan	Apr 74	2.7	11.4	24.9	30.8
West Germany France	Apr 74 Apr 74	0.6	6.3	7.1	7.3
United Kingdom	Apr 74	1.6 3.4	7.7 10.3	13.2	17.7
Italy	Apr 74	1.2	9.2	16.3	27.0 26.6
Canada	l Apr 74 l	0.7	6.0	9.9	11.4

RETAIL SALES*

Current Prices				verage Ana owth Rate S	
United States Japan West Germany France United Kingdom	Latest fr Month May 74 Nov 73 Feb 74 Feb 74 Jan 74	om Previou Month 1.0 3.4 0.9 0.8 -1.3	ge	1 Year Earlier 6.8 27.4 0.9 12.9	3 Months Earlier** 13.9 32.0 11.4 29.0 16.9
Italy Canada	Oct 73 Mar 74	0.6 -1.0	16.2 11.4	29.1 11.8	56.7 23.1

MONEY SUPPLY.

		011	Growth Pate Since			
	om Previou Month 1.6 1.2 0.5 ~0.3	ge	1 Year Earlier 7.0 15.8 1.1 9.0	3 Months Earlier ** 10.0 8.7 8.6 14.9		
Apr 74 Dec 73	2.7 2.6	9.3 21.2	3.0 17.9	1.0 22.1 18.5		
	Latest fr Month May 74 Feb 74 Feb 74 Feb 74 Apr 74	Latest from Previous Month Month Month Feb 74 1.6 Feb 74 0.5 Feb 74 -0.3 Apr 74 2.7 Dec 73 2.6	Latest from Previous Month Month 1970 May 74 1.6 7.0 Feb 74 1.2 17.6 Feb 74 0.5 8.8 Feb 74 -0.3 11.9 Apr 74 2.7 9.3 Dec 73 2.6 21.2	Latest from Previous Month 1970 Earlier May 74 1.6 7.0 7.0 Feb 74 1.2 17.6 15.8 Feb 74 0.5 8.8 1.1 Feb 74 -0.3 11.9 9.0 Apr 74 2.7 9.3 3.0 Dec 73 2.6 21.2 17.9		

MONEY-MARKET RATES

		Percent Rate of Interest					
United States Japan West Germany	Representative Rates Prime finance paper Call money Interbank loans (3 Months)	Latesi 6 Jun 3 Jun 31 May	Date 9.25 12.50 9.38	1 Year Earlier 7.25 6.63	3 Months Earlier 7.25 12.00	1 Month Earlier 9.00 12.00	
France United Kingdom Canada Euro-Dollars	Call money Local authority deposits Finance paper Three-month deposits	28 May 30 May 31 May 31 May	13.00 13.13 12.00 11.88	7.63 7.52 6.50 8.69	12.75 14.63 8.50 8.88	9.50 11.75 13.75 10.85 11.50	

"Sessonally adjusted.
""Average for latest 3 months compared with average for previous 3 months.

12 June 1974 Office of Economic Research/CIA

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EXTERNAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

EXPORTS*

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			COMORTAN					
	, atest	Month						
			Million US \$		Percent			
	ľ	Million US \$	1974	1973	Change			
United States	Api 74	8,230	30,624	20,908	46.5			
Japan	Apr 74	4,267	15,293	10,941	39.8			
West Germany	Apr 74	7,734	28,078	19,070	47.2			
France	Apr 74	3,764	14,305	10,624	34.6			
United Kingdom	Apr 74	3,048	10,749	8,801	22.1			
Italy	Apr 74	2,502	8,827	5,708	53.0			
Canada	Apr 74	2,429	10,020	7,978	25.6			

EXPORT PRICES

US\$	Average Annual Growth Hale Space						
		etceat Chan rom Pryviou Month	1 Year Earlier	3 Months Earlier			
United States Japan West Gormany France	Apr /4 Dec 73 Mar 74 Jan 74	0.8 2.0 5.9 -5.9	1970 11.5 13.7 13.9 11.1	30.3 32.6 21.9 18.9	23.5 14.9 37.5 -35.2		
United Kingdom Italy Canada	Dec 73 Oct 73 Feb 74	0.1 2.1 4.1	8.7 11.6 12.4	17.4 23.7 34.3	12.0 29.1 65.6		

IMPORTS'

f.o.b.

			Cumulative						
	Latest	Month							
	***		Million	Percent					
	1	Million US \$	1974	1973	Chagge				
United States	Apr 74	8,138	29,843	21,545	38.5				
Japan	Apr 74	4,678	16,834	8,785	89.3				
West Germany	Apr 74	5,423	19,720	14,994	31.5				
France	Apr 74	4,141	15,362	10,092	52.2				
United Kingdom	Apr 74	3,981	14,570	9,798	48.7				
Itroly	Apt 74	3,368	11,580	6,406	80.8				
Canada	Apr 74	2,306	9,605	7,290	31.7				

EXPORT PRICES

National Currency			Growth Rate Since						
		ercent Chan om Proviou		1 Year	3 Months				
	Month	Month	1970	Earlier	Earlier				
United States	Apr 74	0.6	11.5	30.3	23.5				
Japan	Dec 73	3.4	5.7	20.6	42.6				
West Germany	Mar 74	2.3	4.1	10 0	30.6				
France	Jan 74	3.2	8.0	17.6	31.3				
United Kingdom	Det 73	3.1	9.8	18.8	33.0				
Italy	Oct 73	2.4	8.3	20.4	17.0				
Canada	Feb 74	2.7	l 10.3	31.8	51.5				

TRADE BALANCE*

f.o.b./f.o.b.

	Latest	Month	Comulative (Million US S)				
		Aillion US \$	1974	1973	Change		
United States	Apr 74	92	781	-637	1,418		
Japan	Apr 74	-409	-1.342	2,156	-3,498		
West Germany	Apr 74	2,310	8,355	4,07"	4,280		
France	Apr 74	-377	-1,057	532	-1,589		
United Kingdom	Apr 74	-934	-3,821	-995	-2,826		
Italy	Apr 74	-866	-2,753	~638	- 2,115		
Canada	Apr 74	123	415 أ	688	- 272		

IMPORT PRICES

National Currency

Average Annual Growth Rate Since

	MAALII DOLE C	viii nate State			
Pe					
Latest fr	1 Year	3 Months			
Month	Month	1970	Earher	Earlier	
Apr 74	6.3	19.0	48.6	98.2	
Dec 73	9.3	7.2	29.0	81.5	
Mar 74	1.8	6.2	25.7	56.1	
Jan 74	14.9	11.3	33.0	127.4	
Dec 73	4.5	16.3	42.6	50.6	
Oct 73	3.4	14.0	38.7	30.8	
Feb 74	3.6	7.9	21.3	42.4	
	Latest fr Month Apr 74 Dec 73 Mar 74 Jan 74 Dec 73 Oct 73	Latest from Previous Month Month Month Apr 74 6.3 Dec 73 9.3 Mar 74 1.6 Jan 74 14.9 Dec 73 4.5 Oct 73 3.4	Percent Change	Percent Change 1 Year	

BASIC BALANCE**
Current and Long-Term-Capital Transactions

	Lales	Cumul	Cumulative (Million US S)			
		Million US \$	1973	1972	Change	
United States*	173 IV	1 214 1	1.209	1-9,838	111,047	
Japan	Apr 74	1-1.005	-9,702	2,137	-11,839	
West Germany	Mar 74	1,176	3,950	4,566	- 616	
France	73 IV	-352	-2,391	-369	-2,022	
United Kingdom	73 IV	-1,394	-3,164	-1,989	-1,175	
Italy	72 IV	800	N.A.	2.983	N.A.	
Canada	73 IV	27	376	1,155	-779	

EXCHANGE RATES Spot Rate

As of 7 Jun 74		Percent Thange from						
Japan (Yen) West Germany (Deutsche France (Franc) (Pound United Kingdom Sterling) Italy (Lua) Canada (Dollar)	US \$ Per Unit 0.0035 0.4026 0.2047 2.4035 0.0016 1.0382	Dec 66 28.31 60.14 1.39 - 13.87 2.87 12.55	18 Dec 1971 9.02 29.75 3.96 - 7.76 - 9.59 4.05	19 Mar 1973 - 6.92 13.70 -7.12 -2.34 -12.15 4.06	31 May 1974 - 0.20 1.26 0.10 0.29 0.32 - 0.19			

OFFICIAL RESERVES

•	•	•	•	_	•	 _	•	•	_	-					

			1	Billion US \$				
	Latest		- I.m. 1070	1 Year	3 Months			
United States	End of		Jun 1970 16.3	Earlier 14.0	Earlier I 14.6			
Japan	Apr 74 Apr 74	14.7	4.1	16.8	11.6			
West Germany	Mar 74	32.9	8.8	32.3	33.1			
France	Apr 74	8.1	4.4	11.5	8.3			
United Kingdom	May 74	6.9	2.8	6.7	6.0			
Italy	Mar 74	6.7	4.7	6.3	8.4			
Canada	May 74	6.2	4.3	6.1	J 6.2			

TRADE-WEIGHTED EXCHANGE RATES""

As of 7 Jun 74	Percent Change from						
		18 Dec	19 Mar	31 May			
	Dec 66	1971	1973	1974			
United States	-17.57	-8.16	-1.52	~0.16			
Japan	16.72	•2.96	-8.96	~ 9.34			
West Germany	34.34	17.15	12.09	0.76			
France	~ 22.90	-9.31	-11.75	- 0.69			
United Kingdom	-34.09	-19.87	-5.48	- 0.02			
Italy	-25.74	-24.35	-17.42	- 0.32			
Canada	9.07	2.47	4.11	- 0.27			

^{*}Seasonally adjusted.

^{**}Converted into US dollars at current market rates of exchange.

¹² June 1974

^{***}Weighting is based on each listed country's trade with 16 other industrialized countries to reflect the competitive impact of exchange-rate variations among the major currencies.

